Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3685
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4036

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: BEXP, SY

SUBJECT: PROPOSED TEXAS IOGA TRADE MISSION

REF: (A) DAMASCUS 3672, (B) STATE 146383

1. EMBASSY READ WITH DISMAY REF B, WHICH INDICATES TEXAS TRADE MISSION WILL VISIT ONLY KHARTOUM AND CAIRO AND NOT DAMASCUS. IN REF A, WE ARGUED HARD, AND WE HAD HOPED PERSUASIVELY, THAT TEXAS THEME OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES WAS PERFECT FOR SYRIA AND THAT INCLUSION OF SYRIA IN MIYION'S ITINERARY WOULD BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF SYRIA, OF THE TEXANS, AND OF OUR WORK HERE. OUR CABLE WAS SENT 6/13/77, BUT STATE'S REF B DID NOT REFER TO IT. (DID REFS A AND B CROSS INADVERTENTLY?)

2. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH SYRIAN OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN ABOUT THE PROPOSED TEXAS MISSION, WE SAW CONSIDERABLE ENTHUSIASM ON THE SYRIAN SIDE FOR THE KIND OF AGRICULTURAL THEME THE TEXANS PROPOSED. ALTHOUGH WE WERE CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT THE TEXANS WERE ONLY CONSIDERING SYRIA AS A STOP ON THEIR MIDDLE EASTERN TOUR, AND HAD NOT YET DECIDED AN ITINERARY, WE KNOW THESE SYRIANS WILL BE KEENLY DISAPPOINTED IF THE MISSION SKIPS THIS UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRY. IN FACT, THE MISSION AS PROPOSED SO NEATLY MEETS SYRIA'S SOREST NEED -- RATIOMCL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT -- AND YAT THE UNITED STA IS CAN OFFER HER (INCLUDING STIMULUS OF LARGE USAID LOAN FOR PURCHASE OF JUST THE KIND OF EQUIPMENT THE TEXANS ARE SELLING, AS EXPLAINED IN PARA 2, REF A), THAT IT WOULD BE FOLLY FOR THE MISSION TO PASS UP DAMASCUS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, WE URGE STATE AND USDOC TO APPEAL TO THE TEXANS TO RECONSIDER. SURELY, A MISSION WITH ONLY TWO STTVS -- SUDAN AND EGYPT -- CAN FIND TIME TO INCLUDE A THIRD GEOGRAPHICALLY SO PROXIMATE. AT LEAST, THE TEXAS ADVANCE MAN MIGHT FLY ON TO DAMASCUS AFTER HIS KHARTOUM STOP THE SECOND WEEK OF JULY TO APPRISE FOR HIMSELF SYRIAN POTENTIAL. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT EVEN A BRIEF VISIT TO SYRIA WILL CONVINCE HIM THAT SYRIA OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES WHICH SHOULD NOT BE SCORNED. PELLETREAU

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